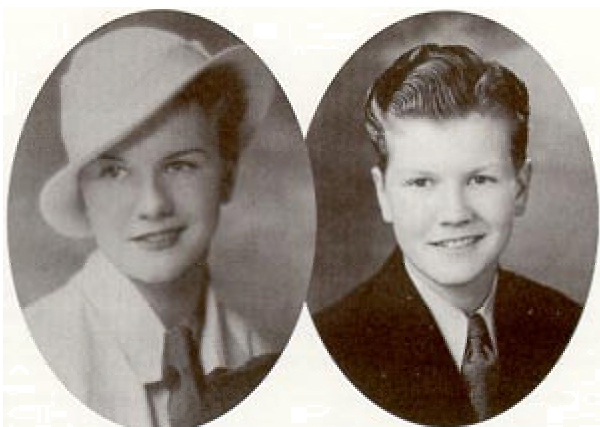


▼ Gay Pride Month ▼



Billy Tipton

Billy Tipton, a female jazz musician who lived as a man from the time she was nineteen, until he died at age seventy-four. Tipton was born female but from the age of 19, in the year 1933, lived as a man, marrying five women, adopting and raising three boys. The first wife knew of his transgender status... the rest including his children, did not.

Born Dorothy Lucille Tipton in Oklahoma City in 1914. Her mother, Reggie, gave her piano lessons and dressed her in ruffles. Her inventor-father, G.W. Tipton, was a daredevil pilot who took her up in airplanes. When, at 19, Dorothy began to live as a man, she took her father's nickname, Billy. By then, her parents were divorced and her father had faded from her life. But Billy Tipton, the self-made man, kept up a clandestine relationship with his/her mother and other relatives throughout his life. Billy Tipton was careful to leave as little legal documents as possible. He finished high school, but failed to request graduation documents, as though already planning to leave his female birth identity behind. Early in his career he obtained legal documents listing him as male. Billy Tipton was a minor, but well respected, jazz musician and traveling entertainer before settling down as an entertainment agent in Spokane, Washington. Tipton's cover was blown only after her death from bleeding ulcers in 1989. She hadn't seen a doctor in more than 50 years, but her autopsy showed that her body was that of a normal 74-year-old woman.